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DE RUEHPU #0983 3521438  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 181438Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0106  
INFO HAITI COLLECTIVE  
RHMFSS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0024

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 000983

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
S/CRS  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
INR/IAA  
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PASS TO AMCONSUL QUEBEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR KCRM ASEC HA  
SUBJECT: DAY OF INACTION: LAVALAS FAILS TO MOBILIZE ITS BASE

REF: 09 PAP 000996

¶1. (SBU) A small group of Fanmi Lavalas (FL) supporters gathered on December 16 for a "Day of Action" commemorating the 1991 exile and 1994 return of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti. Protestors also used the occasion to demand the return of Aristide and called for the ouster of current members of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). Although some protestors were observed committing petty robberies after the march concluded, the demonstration was smaller than anticipated and largely uneventful.

¶2. (SBU) Protestors circled Port-au-Prince's Bel Air neighborhood to drum up support before attending a press conference held by Lavalas spokesperson Maryse Narcisse and then marching on CEP offices in Delmas. Heard yelling, "Down with Preval!" and "Today is our day we celebrate!" the crowd of approximately 150 persons marched around downtown before heading to the electoral authority's offices. The Haitian National Police were prepared and present for the event; there were no noteworthy police actions against the marchers.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: This demonstration was markedly different from the late 1990s when Lavalas could easily fill the streets with thousands of protestors, and indicates the extent to which the party has lost its power. Even two years ago, party organizers could count on two thousand supporters to take to the streets. Fanmi Lavalas has lost much of the popular support it enjoyed after the fall of Jean Bertrand Aristide and the party suffers from long-standing differences between its pro-Aristide and moderate branches. Many former Lavalas candidates opted to register under different political movements (Initi, Veye Yo and Lavni) in order to participate in the elections. The CEP's successive exclusions of FL from the legislative elections, combined with Preval's co-opting several key Lavalas sympathizers into his political movement (including Yves Cristalin and Marjorie Michel), has significantly weakened the already struggling Fanmi Lavalas.  
MERTEN